

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 043032 TOSEC 040214

EXDIS

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT TEHRAN 1776, SENT SECSTATE, INFO BEIRUT,
DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV 22 FEB 76:

QUOTE S E C R E T TEHRAN 1776

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS--AND ARAFAT PROPOSAL

1. DURING HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH AND A SUBSEQUENT CALL ON
FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY FEBRUARY 21, SENATOR STEVENSON
DESCRIBED A CONVERSATION HE HAD RECENTLY WITH PLO LEADER
ARAFAT IN BEIRUT. HE INTRODUCED THE SUBJECT BY STATING THAT
THE STEP BY STEP APPROACH TOWARD A MIDDLED EAST SETTLEMENT
SEEMS TO HAVE REACHED A DEAD END AND A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO
GET ALL THE CONCERNED PARTIES BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE
IN A MULTILATERAL OR INTERNATIONALIZED FORUM. IT WAS IN THIS
CONTEXT THAT HE ASKED ARAFAT IF ANYTHING COULD BE DONE TO
BREAK OUT OF THE CURRENT STALEMATE. ACORDING TO STEVENSON,
AFAFAT SAID THAT BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ISRAIL'S
RIGHT TO EXIST AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE HE MUST HAVE SOME-

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THING TO SHOW HIS PEOPLE. THIS SOMETHING COULD BE ISRAELI

WITHDRAWAL OF A "FEW KILOMETERS" IN THE GAZA STRIP AND ON THE WEST BANK. ARAFAT ALSO SAID THAT THIS "DISENGAGEMENT" COULD BE SUPERVISED BY THE UN AND THE VACATED TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY UN FORCES RATHER THAN PALESTINAINS. WHEN STEVENSON NOTED WITH SURPRISE THAT ARAFAT HAD NOT MENTIONED WITHDRAWAL ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND ASKED WHETHER PRESIDENT ASAD WOULD AGREE WITH THE PROPOSAL IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MOVEMENT ON THE Golan FRONT, ARAFAT CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD. STEVENSON TOLD THE SHAH AND KHALATBARY THAT THIS WAS AN IDEA HE HAD NOT HEARD HERETOFORE AND WONDERED WHETHER IRAN MIGHT BE WILLING TO JOIN WITH THE UNITED STATES IN URGING ISRAEL TO TAKE ARAFAT UP ON HIS PROPOSAL. BOTH WERE SKEPTICAL THAT ASAD WOULD AGREE TO ANY SUCH PROPOSAL AND FURTHER WONDERED WHETHER ARAFAT IS STILL IN FULL CONTROL OF THE PLO AND WHETHER HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY THE PALESTINIANS WITH HIM. THEY ALSO ASKED WHAT THE USG THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROPOSAL. STEVENSON RESPONDED THAT HE HAD ONLY HAD HIS CONVERSATION WITH ARAFAT SEVERAL DAYS AGO ON HIS CURRENT TRIP AND HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. NEVERTHELESS, HE KNEW THAT IN GENERAL THE USG WAS ANXIOUS TO BREAK THE CURRENT STALEMATE AND THAT IT WAS EXAMINING A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS.

2. NEITHER THE SHAH NOR KHALATABARY SEEMED INCLINED TO PRESS THIS PROPOSAL ON ISRAEL, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THEY DID NOT FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ASAD OR ANY OTHER ARAB LEADER MUCH LESS THE PALESTINAIN PEOPLE THEMSELVES. FURTHER, KHALATBARY ARGUED THAT IN MATTERS OF THIS SORT IRAN WAS NOT WELL PLACED TO PRESS A PARTICULAR PROPOSAL ON ONE PARTY OR THE OTHER BECAUSE, HAVING RELATIONS WITH BOTH, IT WAS ALSO SUSPECT TO BOTH. NEVERTHELESS, KHALATABRY DID SAY THAT HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR IRAN TO MAKE INQUIRIES AS TO WHETHER SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF SUCCEEDING WHILE CAREFULLY AVOIDING ANY INDICATION THAT IT WAS A POSITION IRAN WAS IN FACT ADVOCATING. HELMS UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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